



GERMANS FROM RUSSIA
GRHC
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**Finding Aid to the
Reuben Drefs
Collection
2006.08**

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OVERVIEW

Donor: Reuben Drefs

Accession Date: 20 March 2006

Collection Number: 046

Quantity: 2 folders and a book

Summary: A book of sermons published in 1872, Predigten für alle Sonn-, Fest- und Feiertage nebst einigen Busstags-Predigten und Grabreden, and a song sheet, "O Where is the Home of the Soul to be Found?"

Languages: English & German

Links:

- [My German-Russian Heritage](#) by Reuben Drefs – Germans from Russia Symposium, July 1990 (GRHC webpage)
- [Reuben Drefs Genealogy Site](#)

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Citation: Reuben Drefs Collection, 046, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, NDSU Libraries, Fargo, ND.

BIOGRAPHY

In 1876, the Drefs (Drews) family immigrated to the United States from South Russia, eventually settling in South Dakota. Their family name was altered from Drews to Drefs around 1835.

John Drefs was born in 1839 to parents John and Anna Elisabeth (Wenzlaff) Drefs. The family lived Bessarabia, South Russia. John and Anna had nine children between 1828 and 1842. Anna

died in 1844. John, son of John and Anna Elisabeth (Wenzlaff) Drefs, married Christina Tschritter in 1860, and the couple had a few children. Christina (Tschritter) Drefs died in 1870 or 1871. John remarried to Christina Zeitner, and the couple raised many children. A few years later, John and his family immigrated to the United States.

Frederick Drefs was born in 1862 to parents John and Christina (Tschritter) Drefs. He immigrated with his family in 1876. Frederick Drefs married Wilhelmina Jungling and the couple raised many children. Frederick Drefs died in 1940, and his wife, Wilhelmina, died in 1945.

John F. Drefs was born on November 5, 1898, to parents Frederick and Wilhelmina Drefs. On May 21, 1923, John F. Drefs married Bertha A. Fink. Bertha died in 1971, and John died in 1992. John F. and Bertha A. Drefs had three children: Ruth, Vernon, and Reuben.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Reuben Drefs Collection** contains a song sheet and a sermon book. The song sheet is a typescript of verses of “O Where is the Home of the Soul to be Found?” On the top of the song sheet the following note is typed: “(To be sung by the Congregation in cemetery).” The song sheet is typed on a half sheet of brown paper, approximately 8 ½” x 5 ½”. A note along with the song sheet reads, “Used by Reuben Drefs father.”

The sermon book, Predigten für alle Sonn-, Fest- und Feiertage nebst einigen Busstags-Predigten und Grabreden. Vols. I and II by Ludwig Hofacker, consists of many sermons in German. The book was published in 1872 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The binding on the book is in poor condition, and the spine is detached. The donor, Reuben Drefs, included a note along with the sermon book: “This was the book of sermons that kusters/ lay teachers in Poland and Russia read to the congregation in the absence of the pastor.”

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

2006 Small Collections Box

Collection/Folder	Contents
2006.08/1	Finding aid, inventory, and historical information
2006.08/2	Song sheet – “O Where is the Home of the Soul to be Found?”
2006.08	Book of sermons – <u>Predigten für alle Sonn-, Fest- und Feiertage nebst einigen Busstags-Predigten und Grabreden</u> . Vols I and II, Erste amerikanische Stereotyp-Ausgabe. Philadelphia, Pa.: Kohler, 1872, pages 397; 512.